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## **Environment Department Collects \$95,000 Penalty for Alleged Air Violations at Transwestern Facility Near Portales**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has entered into a settlement agreement with Transwestern Pipeline Company to resolve alleged air violations at the company's P-1 compressor station located approximately five miles northwest of Portales in Roosevelt County. This station compresses natural gas for transmission through a pipeline.

As a part of the settlement, NMED will collect a \$95,000 civil penalty from the company. These funds will go to the State of New Mexico General Fund where they will be available for state funded programs including environmental protection.

This agreement settles issues raised in June 2001 compliance order against Transwestern. In that Order, the Department found that the company had installed a new gas turbine engine at this station before receiving an air quality permit for the modification. This engine had a higher horsepower rating, higher fuel consumption and higher emissions than the permitted engine it replaced.

The station emits carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which contribute to ozone pollution and have been shown to cause asthma, especially in children. The Department must evaluate any new or modified operation to assure that ambient concentrations do not reach a level that will affect public health.

This facility has since applied for and received a permit to modify its operations and is now in compliance with state air regulations.

"Environmental regulations, including permitting and notice requirements, serve a very important purpose," said NMED Secretary Ron Curry. "They protect us from substances that pose serious health risks. We will continue to take strong enforcement actions whenever necessary to ensure that these regulations are followed."

This civil penalty of \$95,000 must be paid to NMED within 20 days of the issuance of this agreement. If Transwestern fails to do this, it will be charged interest at the rate established by state law.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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